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RSP ALL SET TO SWEEP NEPAL POLLS AS COUNTING REACHES FINAL STAGE

As of Sunday evening, the Rashtriya Swatantra Party (RSP) won 122 of 165 seats and was leading in six others, Nepal's Election Commission said

COUNTING FOR 159 SEATS COMPLETED

As per the latest update, the Nepali Congress (NC) is a distant second with 17 seats, while the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist–Leninist) led by K P Sharma Oli has won eight seats, and the Nepal Communist Party has secured three seats. As per an official update on Sunday evening, the counting was completed in at least 159 seats

POLL PANEL WITHHOLDS RESULT IN ONE SEAT

- The result in one seat, Dhanusha Constituency-1, may take a while longer as a court order is pending on the eligibility of RSP's candidate
- Among the three former Nepal prime ministers who contested the March 5 general election, only Pushpakamal Dahal 'Prachanda' managed to win. Both K P Oli Sharma and Madhav Nepal lost | **P11**

24,55,764

WON BY RSP IN PROPORTIONAL VOTING SYSTEM

CHENNAI ▪ MADURAI ▪ VIJAYAWADA ▪ BENGALURU ▪ KOCHI ▪ HYDERABAD ▪ VISAKHAPATNAM ▪ COIMBATORE ▪ KOZHIKODE ▪ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM ▪ BELAGAVI ▪ BHUBANESWAR ▪ SHIVAMOGGA ▪ MANGALURU ▪ TIRUPATI ▪ TIRUCHY ▪ TIRUNELVELI ▪ SAMBALPUR ▪ HUBBALLI ▪ DHARMAPURI ▪ KOTTAYAM ▪ KANNUR ▪ VILLUPURAM ▪ KOLLAM ▪ TADEPALLIGUDEM ▪ NAGAPATTINAM ▪ THRISSUR ▪ KALABURAGI

1. Defending champs India won their third T20 World Cup, becoming the first team to do so in process
2. Co-hosts became the first team to lift T20 WC at home. In previous 9 editions, no home team had won
3. India's total of 255/5 is the highest in a T20 WC final, bettering their 176/7 vs SA in 2024
4. Gautam Gambhir became the first India head coach to capture two ICC titles

HISTORY MAKERS AT HOME

SWAROOP SWAMINATHAN
@ Ahmedabad

India players lift the trophy after their victory in Ahmedabad on Sunday | DEBADATTA MALLICK

AT long last, glory and a batting spectacle. Release. An outpouring of love from over a lakh of people, most of them dressed in various hues of India blue. In the scene of their greatest defeat, one of their biggest wins. The scars of November 19 (loss to Australia in ODI World Cup final) will remain but March 8 will bring with it the necessary balm to tide over the ghost of that horror. The stadium, gateway to India's biggest sporting project, can heal. The T20 World Cup will stay with them.

For the tens of thousands who were part of the imposing circular Blue Wall from as early as 4.30 PM, this was a memory for a lifetime. Even as Suryakumar Yadav & Co. took turns to hold aloft the shiny 6kg mostly silver trophy deep into the Ahmedabad night, nobody was prepared to go home. Board exams be damned, a new work week could wait. Sleep was set aside for a few hours to watch their favourite sporting team create history.

No side had ever won this title at home. No team had ever defended this title. Nobody had won it thrice. India took a sledgehammer to history. That's how you create a new sporting identity. Not by winning it once but doing it again and again. It's why Australia have an aura about them. It's why Brazil are football's aristocrats. It's the only path towards invincibility. You can be good, but to be truly immortal, you need to make winning your only calling card.

And they did everything in their power. Eighteen months of preparation was followed by trips to temples, delaying a training session as it collided with a lunar eclipse during their World Cup campaign. There was even an apocryphal story about changing hotels.

And it was apt that Sanju Samson, Ishan Kishan and Abhishek Sharma, the three musketeers who had been identified to redefine the art of batting in this format, took them there.

They have shown the limits of what's possible in this format. Needing 255, it was too much for the Kiwis. **P13**

Iran picks new Supreme Leader as war deepens

US-Israel strikes hit oil infra in Tehran; Iran destroys targets in Kuwait, Bahrain

AGENCIES @ Tehran, Tel Aviv, Dubai

IRAN's Assembly of Experts tasked with appointing the next Supreme Leader reportedly arrived at a majority decision on Sunday, but stopped short of naming him.

The 88-member clerical body has sought some time to remove "some obstacles" before announcing the name. Khamenei's son Mojtaba is billed to be the front-runner to succeed Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, killed over a week ago in the strikes that triggered the war between Iran and Israel-US.

The development came on a day when US-Israeli air strikes destroyed fuel dumps and triggered fires that choked much of Tehran in a thick blanket of smoke. In response, Iran struck Gulf infrastructure, hitting fuel tanks at Kuwait's international airport and hit a desalination plant in Bahrain with the war reaching its second week.

WAR WATCH

The war, which Israel and US launched on February 28, has so far claimed at least 1,230 lives in Iran, 397 in Lebanon including 83 children, 11 in Israel, and six US soldiers.

The impact of the conflict is no longer limited to West Asia as it has rattled global markets, oil indices and disrupted air travel. If the war continues for long, it could impact energy prices worldwide. In India, cooking gas prices have already gone up.

With the joint US-Israeli strikes continuing on Tehran, Iran's president Masoud Pezeshkian vowed to expand attacks on US targets across the Gulf. "The more pressure they impose on us, the stronger our response will naturally be," Pezeshkian said.

Neighbouring countries have borne much of Tehran's brunt, with 16 people killed in the Gulf states since the war began, according to an AFP tally. Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Kuwait all reported new attacks on Sunday.

Israel-US hit Iran's oil well

A thick plume of smoke rose from an oil well hit by a US-Israeli strikes in Tehran Sunday. Israel said it struck "a number of fuel storage facilities in Tehran" used "to operate military infrastructure"

Brent crude at 5-year high

Crude oil price continued rising after some key countries slashed their output. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) soared to $115 on Sunday. Brent rose to $117, the highest level since 2022

Arab League warns Iran

Arab League's secretary-general Ahmed Aboul Gheit said Sunday that Iranian attacks on Gulf member states were "reckless", urging Tehran to reverse what he called a "massive strategic mistake"

AICC chief Mallikarjun Kharge and DCM DK Shivakumar in Chittapur on Sunday

Trump is a dictator and Modi his slave: Kharge

RAMAKRISHNA BADSESHI
@ Kalaburagi

AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge, also opposition leader in the Rajya Sabha, launched a scathing attack on US President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, alleging, "Trump is a dictator and Modi is his slave."

Participating in a foundation-stone laying ceremony for projects worth over Rs 1,060 crore in the Chittapur constituency at Chittapur town on Sunday, he said the US has allowed oil purchases from Russia for only a month now and Modi is listening to what America says.

On the ongoing war in West Asia, he said that when Jawaharlal Nehru was Prime Minister, the Non-Alignment Pact was signed, which had led to world peace. "But what is Modi doing now? After he went to Israel, it bombed Iran. Iran's leader Khamenei was assassinated. If the leader of a country is assassinated, will that country be at peace? Will it be possible for the world to be at peace? Modi has made friendship with Trump and put our country in a bind," he said.

"Epstein files contain information about who went to the sexual offender. Trump is keeping it to scare Modi," he alleged. Though Congress ruled for 75 years, it always protected the interests of the country. "No other country imposed conditions on India when Congress was in power," he added. **P5**

BUDGET SESSION

Sparks to fly as motion against Speaker in Lok Sabha today

PREETHA NAIR @ New Delhi

THE stage is set for a stormy start to the second leg of the Budget session of Parliament on Monday, with the Lok Sabha set to take up an Opposition motion seeking the removal of Speaker Om Birla.

The rare move, which is the first in nearly four decades, highlights the deepening rift between the Opposition and the ruling side. The government is likely to allocate around three hours for the discussion on the motion, with three members each from the Treasury and Opposition benches expected to participate, sources said. From the Congress, either Deputy Leader in the Lok Sabha, Gaurav Gogoi or K C Venugopal, is likely to participate in the debate, sources said.

While both the Congress and the BJP have issued whips directing their members to be present in the House, the BJP-led NDA holds a clear numerical advantage to defeat the resolution in the 543-member Lok Sabha. However, the Opposition received a boost after the Trinamool Congress announced Saturday that it would support the motion.

As many as 118 opposition members had submitted notice to move a resolution to remove Birla from office for not allowing the Leader of Opposition and other opposition leaders to speak in the House on the motion of thanks to the President's address, as well as for suspending eight opposition MPs.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has backed Birla, stating he had taken all Parliamentarians along and was committed to upholding the principles of the Constitution and Parliamentary democracy.

Amid the escalating conflict in West Asia, Lok Sabha will also see a briefing by External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on the evolving situation there.

MHA asks Bengal chief secretary to explain lapses during Prez visit

SUBHENDU MAITI & PARVEZ SULTAN @ Kolkata / New Delhi

THE Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on Sunday sought a detailed report from the West Bengal government on the alleged protocol violation and lapses during President Droupadi Murmu's visit to the state on Saturday to attend the International Santal Conference in Darjeeling district.

Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan directed West Bengal Chief Secretary Nandini Chakraboty to explain the alleged lapses in security protocol, venue arrangements, and travel route during the President's programme.

Sources said the MHA also wanted to know the reason behind the failure the chief minister, chief secretary, and DGP to receive the President upon her arrival, which is a gross violation of protocol.

President Droupadi Murmu | PTI

No violation: Mamata

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Sunday claimed there was no protocol violation at the President's programme, terming it a "private event"

The conference was held at a ground near the Bagdogra airport in Gosainpur, instead of the planned venue in Bidhannagar. Speaking at the event, on Saturday, Murmu had publicly expressed displeasure over the low turnout, attributing it to the change of venue, and noted the absence of the CM and her ministers.

In her response, Banerjee accused the President of playing politics at the best of the BJP ahead of the state polls, triggering a political firestorm.

On Sunday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi tore into the Trinamool Congress (TMC) saying the "enlightened people" of West Bengal would never forgive the party for "insulting" the President, who is a woman and a tribal. "The dirty politics and arrogance of power of the TMC, which has gravely insulted a tribal President, will soon be shattered... The country will not forgive them, the tribal community will not pardon them, and the women of the nation will not forgive them," Modi said.

Final ward-wise quota list out for GBA polls

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

AFTER considerable delay, the final ward-wise reservation for 369 wards under the five city corporations of the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) was released by the government on Saturday night. In all, 176 wards have been reserved for women. This will take Bengaluru closer to the much-delayed civic elections, which the state government has committed to hold before June 30 in front of the Supreme Court.

In all, 198 wards have been reserved for the general category, 43 for Scheduled Caste, seven for Scheduled Tribe, 97 for Backward Class A and 24 for Backward Class B. The draft of the reservation list was released on January 8, allowing objections to be filed by January 23. On Saturday, announcing the list, the undersecretary of the urban development department stated that the objections were submitted before the review committee, constituted under the chairmanship of the additional chief secretary, on February 17. The committee examined the objections as per the Greater Bengaluru Governance Act, 2024. It observed that some suggestions were justified and changes were made accordingly.

The committee then recommended the list, maintaining the quota for all sections as per the guidelines, to the government, which approved it, the undersecretary stated. **P2**

EXPRESS READ

Dalit in custody dies in TN hosp, kin allege torture

SIVAGANGA: A 26-year-old Dalit youth, who was arrested by police in connection with an assault case at Manamadurai, Sivaganga district, allegedly died while undergoing treatment for fracture at the Government Rajaji Hospital in Madurai early on Sunday. His family claimed that he was tortured by the police **P7**

TOUGH LUCK

India's Lakshya Sen goes down fighting in the All England Open Final to Chinese Taipei's Lin Chun-Yi. Lakshya, 24, who trains in Bengaluru, lost 15-21, 20-22 in 57 minutes. It was Lakshya's fifth straight loss to Lin | PIC: X | **P13**

15-yr-old student goes on rampage in hostel, kills 1

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Ballari

A shocking incident of assault unfolded late Saturday night at the hostel attached to Gurukul International School, a private educational institution, on Talur Road in Ballari district, leaving one student dead and several others injured.

Ballari Superintendent of Police Suman D Pennekar said a 15-year-old boy, classified as a child in conflict with the law, allegedly assaulted eight to nine fellow students at the hostel.

The attack occurred around 10.15 pm after dinner when most students were asleep or resting.

The accused boy has been arrested. The Ballari police are interrogating him to connect the dots and the reason behind the heinous crime.

Asked if the boy was inspired by internet games, the SP said, "The school does not allow use of mobiles. I don't think he was inspired by any internet game."

The accused boy reportedly used a sharp weapon and an iron rod, described by the police as a bed frame, to attack his classmates indiscriminately. Among the victims were eight students and the hostel warden, who also stays on the premises and tried to intervene.

One 15-year-old student, Hemanth Lakshman from Adoni in Andhra Pradesh, died in the assault, while one other victim is said to be in a serious condition. "The condition of the student is improving," the SP said. The remaining students sustained various degrees of injuries and were immediately rushed to the Ballari Medical College and Research Centre and other nearby hospitals for treatment. **P5**